

Your Comment on the Foxton Solar Farm

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)			
First name	Kerry		
Last name	Sketcher		
Postal address			
Home phone / Mobile phone		Work phone	
Email (a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you)			

2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
☒	I can receive emails and my email address is correct	☐	I cannot receive emails and my postal address is correct

Please see our comments attached.

Thank you for your comments

Kerry Sketcher (adjacent western boundary neighbour)

Below are our thoughts of what my family and I have considered on the application of the Foxton Solar Farm (referred to in our comments as the "solar plant"). Farms are for dairy, dry stock, horses and cropping, not security fencing, panels and industrial plants. Our comments only relate to the southern and western boundaries of the solar plant but I'm sure they will relate to other areas of the solar plant also.

Animal welfare

We have a lifestyle property of 3 ¼ acres which is on the western boundary of the proposed solar plant (see plan 2 marked with an *). The proposed placement of the solar panels will be extremely close to our horse paddocks eastern boundary. We have two rescue horses (17 years and 6 years) that have been with us for a number of years.

Horses are highly sensitive animals and are vulnerable to sudden environmental changes. Noise and vibration sounds can cause severe stress, panic and flight. Dust and air quality from heavy earthmoving equipment and construction traffic can irritate their respiratory systems. Visual distractions from construction crews, vehicles and structures can spook them as they are used to a quiet predictable environment.

Our horses occupy all of our land not just where our dwelling is and they graze all along our eastern boundary. **What concerns us is:**

- What happens during construction of the solar plant our horses get stressed and panicked with the constant noise and vibration of the truck movements, construction and piling.
- What happens if the dust causes the horses to have respiratory problems?
- Are Genesis going to pay for any vet bills that may occur if any accidents should happen, ie our horses are spooked or distressed and hurt themselves?
- Are Genesis going to pay for alternative grazing and relocation costs during the construction of the solar plant if our horses are not coping at all?
- Are Genesis going to compensate for the extra time, expense and inconvenience that alternative site grazing for our horses will occur for us?

Solar Panel Placements

We believe the placement of the solar panels are too close to us and to other adjacent neighbours. Also the size of pasture is far too minimal along the western boundary of the solar plant and the southern boundary at Motuiti Road (see plan 2). This affects 10 lifestyle properties (see plan 1) in a very small area which has a huge negative impact for all neighbours in regards to animal welfare, construction noise and the unappealing visual aspect of the plant and we feel that other options must be considered.



The solar farm industry needs to do better in understanding that lifestyle block dwellers occupy and use all of their land, not just where their dwelling is located. Solar panel placement setbacks should be calculated from an adjacent neighbour's property boundary and not from a dwelling with even larger setbacks for properties with horses and livestock.

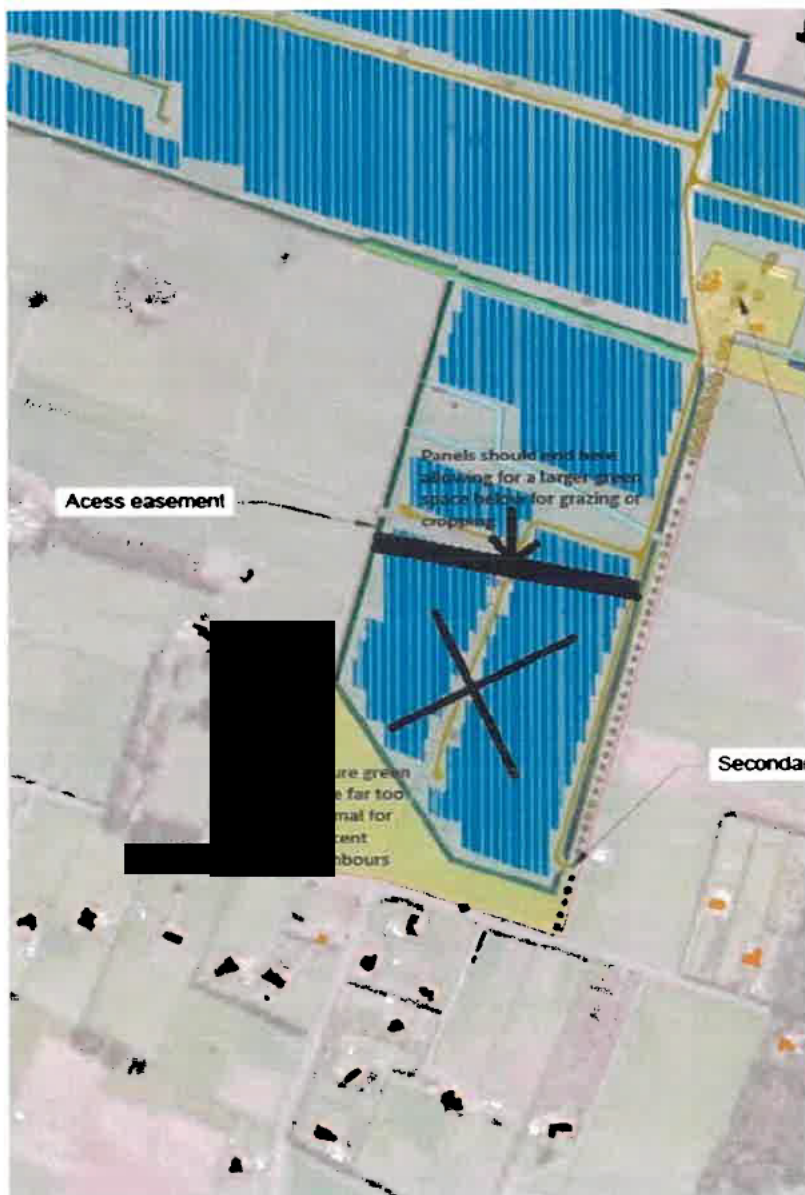
It appears to me that Genesis are trying to pack in as many solar panels as they possibly can without any consideration being given for adjacent neighbours.

Visual and acoustic screening

The solar plant will be surrounded by security fencing. **It is absolutely essential that acoustic screening be installed on the security fence on the western and southern boundaries of the solar plant for the duration of construction** and then heavy duty visual screening be installed until hedging has matured. This would assist with any construction noise and dust as well as visually blocking out any construction for our horses and adjacent neighbours.

To mitigate our concerns

We believe the placement of the solar panels should end further north away from at least 8 adjacent neighbours as marked on the below plan. This would make for a larger pasture greenspace that could be utilised for grazing or even cropping and the solar plant could be considered in part a farm.



Weekends

6 days a week, 12 hours per day, constructing the plant is a real problem for us. It means the only break we get from the construction for at least 18 months is on a Sunday. We have family that work from home during the workday week. That work requires a lot of concentration and construction will be very disrupting and affect work output. There will barely be any let up for us or our horses from the construction at all. **Weekends must remain free of construction to give us all a break otherwise it will make our lives miserable.**

Property values

Buying our lifestyle property several years ago, the attraction was being surrounded by neighbouring farmland and lifestyle blocks. If I had known that in the future there would be a solar plant next door, I would never have bought my land as it is very unappealing to me to live near a solar plant. Whilst I am not against solar farms, I also believe they should be placed where there are no neighbouring dwellings and on unproductive land.

When buying our property we were under strict rules from our Council for building on our land, ie, having non reflective colours, certain building heights, fencing to only be rural fencing, planting to be maintained for the lifetime of any dwelling and a designated only building site beside our neighbours. These conditions were explained to us as to enhance the visual aspect of Motuiti Road and still have a surrounding landscape of rural farmland. This solar plant would not meet any of these conditions that were imposed upon us and to me there is no fairness in that.

I do not know if the solar plant will reduce our property value 10 years down the track or not when the hedgerow screening has matured and construction well over **but I do know that at the commencement of construction of the solar plant and for several years thereafter it will definitely put off any potential buyers if we were to try and sell our property. This in turn will reduce our property value.** The visual aspects alone will put prospective buyers off as many people simply do not want to live next to a solar plant especially under construction or newly established.

All one sided

The only benefits we can see of building a solar plant on this Foxton site is for Genesis and their shareholders alone. Yes it will assist in the disestablishment of the Huntly coal site but that's not in our area. Yes it will employ a number of local people but that's only for 18 months. Meanwhile the adjacent neighbours are expected to live next door to a solar plant putting up with all the construction for 18 months and the unappealing visual effects for many years thereafter whether they agree with it or not and without being offered any compensation from Genesis. Genesis is a power company, I do not understand why they have not, when putting forward their proposal to adjacent neighbours, at least offered a reduction in power costs or any other compensation as an expression of goodwill of what will be a huge inconvenience and unwelcome change for adjacent neighbours.

Thank you for the opportunity of providing our comments. I hope they will be seriously considered.

Kerry Sketcher and family